or serious injury in this incident. The affected district has been sealed off and the exact damage can be assessed only after the same is reopened. A high level committee has been appointed under the Chief General Manager (Production), Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. to inquire into the causes and circumstances leading to the fire and to make recommendations to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

Duty free import of coal

1483. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has urged Government to allow industrial units duty free import of coal to tide over the persistent coal shortage;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to consider the demand of FICCI; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The proposal is under examination of the Government.

कोयले के मूल्यों में वृद्धि करने के लिए मध्य प्रदेश का प्रस्ताव

1484. श्री **अजीत जोगी** : क्या **कोयला** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या केंद्रीय सरकार को मध्य प्रदेश सरकार से विभिन्न श्रेणियों के कोयले के मूल्यों में वृद्धि करने संबंधी कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त हुआ है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(ग) क्या अन्य राज्यों से भी इस तरह की मांगें की गयी हैं ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो उन पर क्या कार्यवाही की जा रही है ?

कोयला मंत्रालय में उप मंत्री (श्री एस० बी० नयमेगौंडा) : (क) और (ख) इस संबंध में उपलब्ध सूचना के अनुसार ऐसे कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त नहीं हुए हैं ।

(ख) और (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता ।

Legislation for privatisation of Coal Industry

1485. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to bring legislation for privatisation of coal mines; and

(b) if so, whether Government have already started leasing out some of the coal mines owned by them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) The Government, at present, has no proposal to privatise the existing coal mines. However, the Government have decided to allow private sector participation in coal mining operation in virgin area for the purpose of captive consumption for power generation and other end uses, as well as to set up coal washeries. A Bill has been introduced in the Parliament to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to implement the above decision of the Government.

(b) No, Sir.

Proposal for transport technology of Coal

1486. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received a Research

and Development proposal from Italy regarding transport technology of coal;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal including its techno-economic features, validity and implications in terms of Indian mining conditions;

(c) what are the details of the assessment made and decision taken thereon; and

(d) whether Government consider appointing Expert Committee to streamline marketing and transport system of Coal India Limited?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) to (c) In 1987 an Italian company had made an offer to Coal India Limited regarding preparation of a feasibility report on High Concentration Coal Slurry Transportation Technology. This study envisaged techno-economic evaluation to assess the applicability of patented coal-water slurry technology to Indian coals and to identity and optimise a commercially integrated system for pipeline transportation and direct combustion of slurry. On examination of various related aspects of the offer the Standing Scientific Research Committee (SSRC) of the Ministry of Coal decided not to pursue this study.

(d) As of now there is no proposal for appointing an Expert Committee to streamline marketing and transport system of Coal India Limited.

साउथ ईस्टर्न कोलफील्ड्स लि० के अधीन एक अस्पताल का निर्माण

1487. **श्री अजीत जोगी** : क्या कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या साउथ ईस्टर्न कोलफील्ड्स लि० (एस०ई०सी०एल०) बिलासपुर के अधीन किसी स्थान पर सभी सुविधाओं से युक्त एक बड़े अस्पताल के निर्माण का कोई प्रस्ताव सरकार के विचाराधीन है ; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसे अस्पताल का किस स्थान पर निर्माण किए जाने की संभावना है ?

कोयला मंत्रालय में उप मंत्री (श्री एस० बी० नयमेगौडा) : (क) और (ख) साउथ ईस्टर्न कोलफील्ड्स लि० द्वारा बिलासपुर में सिगयाडीह के स्थान पर एक बहु-विशेषताओं की सुविधा से सुसज्जित 200 बिस्तर वाले अस्पताल का निर्माण किए जाने का प्रस्ताव है ।

Setting up of coal washeries in private sector for Government mines

1488. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have cleared a proposal to allow the private sector to set up coal washeries for Government mines;

(b) if so, the details of the private sector companies which have shown interest for coal washeries in Government mines;

(c) whether the private washeries have been allowed to sell coal directly to the consumers; and

(d) if so, to what extent the consumers would be benefited?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) The Central Government have decided to permit private sector participation in coal mining for the purpose of captive consumption for power generation and other end uses as may be notified from time to time, and also in setting up of coal washeries.

A Bill has been introduced in Parliament to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to implement the above decision of the Government.